

To: Taylor, Katherine[taylor.katherine@epa.gov]
From: Priselac, Adrienne
Sent: Mon 1/23/2017 8:00:42 PM
Subject: FW: Communities
R9 EJSCREEN and Communities for SMT Discussion July 25 2016 DRAFT.DOCX

Just FYI on this exchange. Should I send on to Jeff?

Also, learned from Deldi and Scott that Debbie and/or Alexis plan to discuss the topic of possible communities for future investment at next week's SMT meeting. I'm not sure if the discussion will be about actually picking communities or just the idea about what Region 9 should do. I think we should alert Jeff about this being brought up next week.

I've attached the EJ screen document that Deldi presented to Debbie and Alexis in August when this topic was first being floated by OSC. I believe Debbie and Alexis may just go with some version of what Deldi presented, but that's just my guess.

Thanks,
Adrienne

From: Stollman, Scott
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2017 4:34 PM
To: Priselac, Adrienne <Priselac.Adrienne@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Communities

Deldi told me Debbie does well with longer emails, so I went longer in my response. I will keep you posted.

From: Stollman, Scott
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2017 3:54 PM
To: Jordan, Deborah <Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov>
Cc: Reyes, Deldi <Reyes.Deldi@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Communities

Debbie,

HQ is verbally directing the Regions and NPMs to move forward with the implementation of the FY17 Communities Action Plan, which is also supported by EJ2020's Communities Chapter. They regularly remind us that community-based work, as we have done in the MVD communities, works and is being demanded of us, and the federal government as a whole, by the communities we serve. We have asked for a written message to go to the EMC from HQ, but I am not sure it will come soon. There is a lot of sensitivity to sending out such an email at this point in time, especially since OP is the lead for the transition and this work can easily be construed as an Obama Administration holdover as opposed to a new approach that many agencies are embracing for the long-term. I was asked before the holidays to comment on numerous drafts of an EMC message. I can share with you a draft of that message if interested.

I am told a shorter version of that a message may go out soon, but it will only reiterate and define the roles of the people like me who represent the Regions and NPMs. They may skip a clear written charge to Regions to select new focus communities. However, OP is also exploring getting on the agenda for the Jan 25 or Feb 8 DRA call to discuss the identification of new communities. If you and other DRAs would like to ensure you get more information from HQ, I recommend you ask Michelle P. in R10 to add it to an agenda.

So what are NPMs and Regions actually doing in this period of transition? Some Regions (R1 for example) are actively doing what you and Alexis proposed – compiling success stories of existing community-based work and figuring out how to identify the next round of focus communities. R5 already has a list of 20 candidate communities that it will whittle down. R2 staff is already visiting some communities it might select to assess them and will soon engage its Division Directors to further vet the candidates. R10 will continue work in its existing focus communities but will wait for the dust to settle before identifying new communities. Many NPMs are saying they hope to provide resources as they have in past years, but none are making concrete commitments given the CR and the transition. Office of Sustainable Communities has every intention of providing its technical assistance programs again, OEJ would like to provide EJ TASC resources, OCHP would like to provide every Region with \$20K again, OLEM would like to work with Regional Brownfields Programs to prioritize TBAs for focus communities, and ORD wants to continue to engage in terms of technical expertise and tools. My sense is the other NPMs will follow suit. So, Regions should use this time to identify where we would like to invest this year. We have a “platform” to enter resource needs that is waiting to be populated.

The list of communities Deldi presented to SMT last summer was meant to be a starting point. Some of our existing focus communities will sunset. Gilroy will probably be the first to sunset, and I anticipate my work in the Las Vegas Valley will sunset later this year. As we heard yesterday, SMT should look at the list to see if there are any communities that are missing. As you also heard yesterday, there are other considerations. For example, does a community even have the capacity to accept our assistance. We ran into some of this with Gilroy. If not, then perhaps a lighter effort and a second tier is needed. Should we select a community that already has an EPA, other federal agency, or even state investment to leverage, as was the case in Las Vegas? Should we go somewhere that has not had an EPA presence/investment and could really use it? The nature of the resources we will have at our disposal will also dictate to some degree which communities and issues we take on. We should also spend some time to figure out where it does and doesn't make sense to try to align other program work. For example, the Water Division's Watershed Program is also looking at ways to prioritize watersheds, and Deldi has been in touch with Sam about our overall approach to community priorities. There are many ways to slice and dice it. Deldi and I have already compiled a list of other considerations in addition to the EJSCREEN data.

In summary, I like your idea of reengaging SMT on Feb 6, and Deldi and I can help you tee up that conversation. We as a Region should use the next weeks to identify the communities that are essentially a priority for us, whether to provide intensive technical assistance as a "full-fledged" focus community or to receive a lighter touch to start building capacity to be competitive for funding. We may want to hold off on reaching out to any communities until the transition is complete. This approach to environmental protection is ultimately driven by the priorities and goals of the community that we and our partners then work to creatively advance. However, we should do the groundwork now to identify the places, and it will benefit us as a Region in many ways.

Thanks,

--scott

From: Jordan, Deborah
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2017 5:17 PM
To: Stollman, Scott <Stollman.Scott@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Communities

Hi Scott,

What is HQ currently directing Regions to do in terms of adding priority communities to the national list for consideration in the coming year? This topic hasn't come up at all in our DRA or DRA/DAA meetings and calls, as people focus on the transition.

One idea I have for moving the ball forward here is to have a division director – level discussion of this at the next monthly director-only SMT, which is Feb. 6. I could supply them with the screening results as a reminder. If I were to tee it up, I'd want to have an outcome in mind, e.g., a list of the few we would add to the national list and/or places to consider engaging further or to lower our resource commitment.

Given the transition, I'm inclined to want to include in the conversation what the level of state/local engagement is as well, as I think an incoming person would ask questions around that.

What are your thoughts?

Thanks so much, and I'm glad we connected today.

Debbie